CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1-42 (Cancelled)

43. (Previously Added) A method of limiting usage of a medical probe, comprising:

detecting an environmental condition to which the medical probe is exposed;

electronically storing a probe sterilization indicator in the medical probe if the detected environmental condition indicates exposure of the medical probe to a sterilization cycle;

determining whether the probe sterilization indicator is present; and

conditionally operating the medical probe based on a presence of the sterilization indicator.

44. (Previously Added) The method of claim 43, wherein the conditional operation of the medical probe comprises preventing operation of the medical probe if the sterilization indicator is present.

45. (Previously Added) The method of claim 43, wherein the conditional operation of the medical probe comprises allowing operation of the medical probe if the sterilization indicator is absent.

46. (Previously Added) The method of claim 43, wherein a presence of the probe sterilization indicator is determined when the medical probe is connected to a control unit.

47-52. (Cancelled)

53. (Previously Added) A control unit for connection to a medical probe, the medical probe having electronic storage componentry, the control unit comprising:

control circuitry configured to electrically couple to the electronic storage componentry for reading data from the electronic storage componentry, and for conditionally operating the medical probe based on a presence of a probe sterilization indicator in the data.

54. (Previously Added) The control unit of claim 53, wherein the control circuitry prevents operation of the medical probe if the probe sterilization indicator is present.

55. (Previously Added) The control unit of claim 53, wherein the control circuitry allows operation of the medical probe if the probe sterilization indicator is absent.

56-61. (Cancelled)

62. (Previously Added) The control unit of claim 53, further comprising:

an RF power source; and

an interlocking device electrically coupled between the RF power source and the control circuitry.